

# ILLINOIS FAMILIES Now and Forever

Families by Foster Care, Adoption and Guardianship®

Department of Children and Family Services®

## May is Foster Parent Appreciation Month



**DCFS honors foster  
families and relatives  
who care for Illinois  
children.**

**Check the DCFS web  
site for a calendar of  
events at DCFS offices**



[www.state.il.us/dcfs](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs)



WHEREAS, to foster means to nourish, cherish and encourage, which is what foster parents do for children whose natural parents can no longer provide them with care; and

WHEREAS, foster parents meet a very special need in our society by ensuring that these children receive attention, respect, love, understanding, compassion, and health and educational services; and

WHEREAS, more than 17,400 children are currently wards of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) due to abuse, neglect or abandonment; and

WHEREAS, the contributions of Illinois foster parents to the welfare of these children are incalculable and irreplaceable; and

WHEREAS, DCFS is equipping an increasing number of grandparents and other relatives to serve as foster parents; and

WHEREAS, specialized training and support services are now being provided to foster parents serving older youth, who now constitute the majority of children in DCFS care; and

WHEREAS, there remains a great demand for additional caring adults in Illinois to consider opening their homes to older children in need of foster care; and

WHEREAS, Illinois foster parents deserve our gratitude and respect for the work they do everyday to ensure that our children receive the support they need throughout their maturing process:

THEREFORE, I, Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim May 2006 as **FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION MONTH** in Illinois, and encourage all citizens to recognize and support the gracious and loving foster parents in their communities.

*In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the  
Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.*

*Done at the Capitol, in the City of Springfield,  
this TWENTY-FIRST day of MARCH, in  
the Year of Our Lord two thousand and  
SIX, and of the State of Illinois  
the one hundred and EIGHTY-EIGHTH*



*Deese White*

SECRETARY OF STATE

*Rod Blagojevich*

GOVERNOR

## From the DCFS Director



Raising healthy and safe children is not an easy job. There are no short cuts and no easy answers. For foster parents, the challenges are even harder. As a foster parent, you provide care to Illinois' most vulnerable children.

May is Foster Parent Appreciation Month in Illinois; a time to pause and reflect on the work that you do day in and day out. While special attention is paid to foster parenting during May, you deserve respect and appreciation every day of the year. So, especially during Foster Parent Appreciation Month, I congratulate your boundless commitment and tireless efforts. My message to you as DCFS' Director is one of deep-felt thanks and appreciation on behalf of all child welfare staff.

Over the past few years we have worked with you to strengthen the services and programs you need, even in the face of significant budget pressures. With you, we share the goal of improving the lives of the children for whom we provide care and helping them find permanent homes.

Our success in finding permanent families for so many children is tempered by the challenge we face in finding nurturing families for older youth, who, now, make up a larger proportion of children in care. The population of children in care aged 16 - 21 will remain at about 5,200 for the next several years, and the portion aged 19-21 will continue to grow. These children have unique and distinct needs as they transition from out-of-home care to adult life. I will look to you for assistance in serving this very important population.

My management team and I understand the importance of working in partnership with you to serve these vulnerable children, no matter their age or their needs. We respect and value your work, your opinions, and your advice. Please know that we share your commitment to the children and families we serve. Have a wonderful Foster Parent Appreciation Month!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bryan Samuels".

Bryan Samuels  
Director

## Thank you caregivers

On behalf of my staff and myself, may I extend our thanks and appreciation to each and every foster parent for selfless dedication to caring for our special children.

Recently, I met with the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council to introduce a new phase to Illinois' continuing commitment to permanency for all children served. As we enhance services to our older children preparing for adulthood, we look to better ways to help families achieve timely and safe reunification. Clearly, the experience, the assistance and the support of foster parents are critical to this work on behalf of children and their birth families.

Through the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council, a series of discussions with foster parent groups are planned. We look to you to tell us what foster families need in order to assist in family reunification. Additional learning institutes are planned enlisting the assistance of past and current foster parents who experience success in supporting family reunification. New programs, such as the Department's pilot for reunification foster care underway in the Cook South Region and *Parent Partners*, a program to train foster parents to serve as coaches in visitation and shared parenting, are opportunities we want to discuss with you. We look forward to your help in making the Department's efforts to achieve safe reunification a reality.

Once again, congratulations to all foster parents for their commitment and service.

Velma Williams  
Deputy Director, Clinical Services  
and Professional Development

# DCFS INVITES YOU TO THE ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

August 11 – August 20, 2006

Corner of Peoria Road and Sangamon Ave., Springfield

***Foster Families, Relative Caregiver Families, Adoptive Families,  
& Guardianship Families - Choose Your Own Discount Day!***

***This is Your ONLY Invitation to the State Fair. Please Act NOW if You Wish to Attend.***

Please complete the coupon below if you would like to attend the Illinois State Fair and get the discounts available for foster, adoptive, and guardianship families. **Please mail or fax the coupon to DCFS TODAY, and no later than June 30, 2006. Nothing will be sent to you unless you return this coupon. Reminders will NOT be sent.**

If you return the coupon now, in July you will be sent:

- A ticket that will get your vehicle and everyone in it into the Fair and parked for one fee of \$3.
- 1 food ticket for each family member, worth \$3 in food or drink.
- One ride ticket for each family member that provides unlimited rides for \$10 during certain times **ONLY on Monday, August 14 – Friday, August 18.**
- A special map of the fairgrounds made just for you.

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*Please Complete the Form Below & Mail or Fax to DCFS Today*

**COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS COUPON NO LATER THAN JUNE 30, 2006**

Office of Communications, Department of Children and Family Services  
406 East Monroe Street, Station 65  
Springfield, IL 62701-1498  
**Fax: 217-524-0014**

***Tickets may NOT be requested by telephone.***

We are a licensed foster family, relative caregiver, a guardianship family or have adopted a child through DCFS, and we would like to attend the 2006 Illinois State Fair. We understand that only our foster, adopted and guardianship children and family members who live in our home consistent with DCFS licensing regulations are eligible for these special offers.

There will be \_\_\_\_\_ family members in our party. Number of vehicles \_\_\_\_\_ (limit 2)

If requesting more than 8 tickets, please print the name and phone number of your licensing or subsidy worker.

Worker's name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. No. \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**For foster families only:**

We are supervised by DCFS \_\_\_\_\_

We are supervised by a private agency \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Name \_\_\_\_\_

***Note - Please bring a copy of this invitation or a copy of a recent board or subsidy invoice with you when you attend the Fair. You may be asked to show this invitation or invoice in order to use the tickets. It is illegal to sell these tickets or transfer them to any person who is not a family member living in your home.***

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## Groups and associations offer advice and assistance statewide

DCFS, private agencies and community initiatives have sponsored many support groups and associations to assist foster and adoptive parents. The following lists can help identify a group that may suit your family. This list is a beginning and will be updated. Please contact the Editor at 312-814-6824 with any corrections or information on other groups that should be listed.

### Cook County Support Groups

#### ADA S. MCKINLEY ASSOCIATION

Contact: Gladys Boyd at 312-808-6174

Meets monthly, call for details.

#### CATHOLIC CHARITIES FP NETWORKING GROUP

Contact: Margaret Monahan at 312-655-7984

Meets last Wednesday from 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
651 W. Lake, Chicago

#### CATHOLIC CHARITIES FP NETWORKING GROUP

Contact: Margaret Monahan at 312-655-7984

Meets last Thursday from 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
1717 Rand Road, Des Plaines

#### C.H.I.L.D. ASSOCIATION

Contact: Ida Lopez (Support Specialist) at  
708-755-5314

Meets last Friday (Apr. - Dec.) at 10 a.m.

DCFS Harvey Office

15115 Dixie Highway, Harvey

#### CHILDREN OF EASTERN EUROPEAN REGIONS (CHEER)

[www.cheerchicago.org](http://www.cheerchicago.org)

#### CIRCLE OF LOVE

Contact: Stacey Saffold at 773-419-4660

Meets third Saturday from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Includes Boy and Girl Scout programs

Sherman Park Library

5440 South Racine, Chicago

#### COOK COUNTY FOSTER PARENT COUNCIL

Contact: Geraldine Wilson at 312-328-2325

Meets first Tuesday at 10 a.m.

Fernwood Park Fieldhouse

10436 S. Wallace St., Chicago

#### COOK CENTRAL DCFS REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Contact: Adrienne Welenc at 773-292-7700

Meets fourth Tuesday at 9:30 a.m.

DCFS, 3518 W. Division, Chicago

No December meeting

#### COOK NORTH DCFS REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Contact: Sari Rowitz at 312-328-2484

Meets second Tuesday at 10 a.m.

1911 S. Indiana, Chicago

#### COOK SOUTH DCFS REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Contact:

Meets third Wednesday at 10 a.m.

Meetings rotate between DCFS Harvey and  
Emerald offices, call for details

#### COOK SOUTH FOSTER PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Info line at 773-371-6113

Meets second Tuesday at 10 a.m.

DCFS 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago

#### FAMILYNET FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT ASSOCIATION

Contact: Betty Seymour at 773-224-4396 or Joyce  
Campbell at 773-721-7977

Meets third Thursday from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

South Central Community Services

1021 East 83rd Street

Potluck dinner at 6:30, tutoring for children



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**GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN  
TRAINING AND SUPPORT GROUP**

Contact: Jean Xoubie at 773-884-2266  
Meets first Thursday from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
Metropolitan Family Services-Midway Site  
3843 W. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, Chicago

**HISPANIC ASSOCIATION (COMBINES WITH NORTH  
EAST FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION)**

Contact: Edith Cruz at 773-425-4634

**HULL HOUSE ASSOC. FOSTER PARENT SUPPORT  
GROUP**

Contact: Julia Johnson at 773-374-9451, ext 136  
Meets third Wednesday at 10 a.m.  
8753 S. Greenwood, Chicago

**JEWISH CHILDREN'S BUREAU ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Contact: Nancy Dorfman-Schwartz at 312-444-  
2090  
Meets third Thursday at Noon  
216 West Jackson, Chicago

**ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON ADOPTABLE CHILDREN**

Contact: Pat Cooper at 847-698-3668  
Meets periodically, call for schedule  
327 North Stewart, Lombard

**ILLINOIS PARENTS FOR BLACK ADOPTION**

Contact: Drucilla Fair at 773-734-2305  
7930 S. Colfax Avenue, Chicago  
Offers pre-and post-adoption support

**LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF ILLINOIS ADOPTION  
GROUP**

Contact: Stephanie More at 312-949-4340  
Meets quarterly. Contact Stephanie for schedule  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
611 Randolph Street, Oak Park (street parking  
available)  
Focuses primarily on international and private  
adoptions.

**LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF ILLINOIS FOSTER  
PARENT SUPPORT GROUP**

Contact: Denice Clark at 773-371-2754  
Meets Monday or Tuesdays (group votes)  
from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
11740 South Western Avenue, Chicago

**NEW BEGINNINGS FOSTER/ADOPTIVE PARENT  
ASSOCIATION**

Contact: Regina Boyd at 708-385-6263  
Meets first Monday at 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
Fernwood Park  
10436 S. Wallace, Chicago  
Children are welcome with adult. Bring a dish.

**NORTHEAST AREA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION**

Contact: Donsetta Blakely at 773-778-7445  
Meets third Thursday at 10 a.m.  
Sherman Park Library  
5440 S. Racine Avenue, Chicago

**NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION**

Contact: Kathy Bilbo at 773-866-5729  
Call for schedule/location details.

**NORTH WEST SUBURBAN FOSTER/ADOPT NETWORK**

Contact: Sandra Reinhard at 847-255-8783  
Meets second Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.  
Arlington Countryside Church  
916 E. Hintz Rd., Arlington Heights

**SOUTH CITY FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION**

Contact: Carol Lukacek at 708-891-2206  
Meets second Thursday at 10 a.m.  
DCFS 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago

**YOUTH CAMPUS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Contact: Debra Pinkett at 312-243-0533  
Meets every other month  
901 W. Jackson, Chicago

## Northern Region Support Groups

### **ADOPTIVE FAMILIES TODAY**

Contact: Kathy Casey 847-382-0858  
P.O. Box 1726, Barrington  
www.adoptivefamiliestoday.org  
Serves families in Cook, DuPage, Lake, McHenry & Kane counties

### **ADOPTION NETWORK**

Contact: Michelle Mattes at 847-515-3921  
5070 Highwood Lane, Lake in the Hills

### **CHASI SPECIALIZED FOSTER PARENTS SUPPORT GROUP**

Contact: Barb Buchavekas at 815-962-1043  
Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
Children's Home and Aid Northern Region  
910 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Rockford

### **DEKALB AREA ADOPTIVE FAMILIES**

Contact: Mary Kowalski at 815-758-4307  
Email: Heroncove@aol.com  
303 N. Second Street, DeKalb  
Serves families in DeKalb & neighboring counties

### **FOX VALLEY ADOPTION GROUP**

Contact: Maureen Van Scoit at 630-844-9385  
968 Wellington Circle, Aurora, IL 60505  
Serves families in DuPage, Kane & Kendall counties

### **LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF ILLINOIS FOSTER PARENT GROUP**

Contact: Sharon Franklin 815-284-7796 ext. 2108  
Meets fourth Monday from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
1261 Illinois Route 38, Nachusa  
No summer meetings

### **NORTHERN REGION DCFS FOSTER CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Meets second Thursday from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.  
DCFS Aurora Regional Office  
8 East Galena Blvd., Aurora  
A light dinner is served at 6 p.m.

### **REACHOUT OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS**

Contact: Debbie Perez at 847-566-4316  
Meets first Monday at 6:15 p.m.  
Warren Township Library  
224 N. O'Plain Road, Gurnee  
Serves families in Lake and McHenry counties  
No meetings in August or December

### **ROCKFORD AREA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION**

Contact: Grace Hanley at 815-985-7403 or g.hanley@insightbb.com  
Meets first Monday from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. (no meetings December, June, July or August)  
Rockford Memorial Hospital Ingersoll Building room 1-2.

## Central Region Support Groups

### **CENTRAL ILLINOIS ADOPTIVE FAMILIES**

Contact: Candy Ogden at 309-662-3349  
2206 Oakwood Ave., Bloomington  
Serves families in Dewitt, Fulton, Ford, Logan, Mason, McLean, & Woodford counties

### **CIRCLE OF SUPPORT**

Contact: Black Hawk College FP Training at 888-50-PRIDE  
Meets monthly at various locations  
Serves Peoria families

### **KEEPING THE PROMISE - CHAMPAIGN COUNTY AND MCLEAN COUNTY**

Contact: Maggie Gould at 309-454-1770

### **LAND OF LINCOLN FAPA**

Contact: Cindy Backstein at 217-498-8774 or backstein@mchsi.com  
Meets third Monday at 6 p.m.  
Carol Jo Vecchie Center at 9<sup>th</sup> and Carpenter in Springfield

### **LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF IL ADOPTION SUPPORT GROUP**

Contact: Susan Goble at 309-786-6400  
Meets third Thursday from 6 to 7 p.m.  
4709 44th St. Suite 1, Rock Island  
Babysitting if you phone ahead

### **OURS THROUGH ADOPTION**

Contact: Jean Hess at 563-322-6469  
2618 Arlington Avenue, Davenport  
Serves families in Rock Island, Whiteside, Henry & Mercer counties

### **PARENT TO PARENT (LSSI)**

Contact: Bea Vores at 217-348-3333  
Meets third Thursday at 7 p.m.  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
9th and Cleveland, Charleston  
Serves families in Cumberland, Clark, Coles, & Edgar counties

### **SAFE HOMES FOR KIDS**

Contact: Joyce Loy at 309-794-3558  
Meets third Monday at 9 a.m.  
DCFS Office  
500 42nd Street, Rock Island

### **SOUTH CENTRAL ILLINOIS ADOPTIVE PARENTS ASSOCIATION (SCIAPA)**

Contact: Philip Limper at 217-744-9680  
3013 Dunwich, Springfield  
Serves families in Sangamon, Christian, Macon, Montgomery, Morgan & Menard counties

## **Southern Region Support Groups**

### **EFFINGHAM ADOPTION/GUARDIANSHIP PRESERVATION PROGRAM SUPPORT GROUP**

Contact: Tiffany Cox at 618-521-1271  
Meets third Tuesday from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
First Church of God  
2600 South Banker Street, Effingham  
Dinner included and families must RSVP.  
Open to all adoptive parents and family members.

### **HERRIN ADOPTION/GUARDIANSHIP PRESERVATION PROGRAM SUPPORT GROUP**

Contact: Julie Fritzler at 618-988-1330  
Meets third Thursday from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
Matthews and Associates  
109 Lou Ann Drive, Herrin  
Dinner included and families must RSVP.  
Open to all adoptive parents and family members.

### **ALL-DOPT**

Contact: Marietta Bear & Susan Koniak at 618-667-2493  
654 Bauer Road, Troy  
includes International adoptions

### **HOME ADVANTAGE SOUTH**

Contact: Kim Hutchcraft at 618-435-8293  
Meets second Monday at 6:30 p.m.  
800 Joplin, Benton

### **LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF ILLINOIS - SOUTHERN REGION**

Contact: Kim Holder at 618-997-9196  
2nd Thursday of each month  
from 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
1500 DeYoung, Marion  
Training credits and childcare provided

### **ST. PAUL'S ADOPTION SUPPORT GROUP**

Contact: Royann Touchette at 618-476-3745  
5209 Bohleysville Rd., Milstadt

### **Need help keeping your group going or starting a new group?**

The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) has many resources for support group leaders. The NACAC web site ([www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org)) has a training curriculum for leaders that includes the following topics:

- Becoming a leader
- Parent group development
- Getting the group started
- Developing group identity and activities
- Managing group meetings
- Becoming a nonprofit organization
- Financial planning and fundraising
- Rejuvenating your group

NACAC also provides technical assistance to groups. All travel costs need to be negotiated with NACAC by your group. Contact Diane Martin-Hushman at [hushman@nacac.org](mailto:hushman@nacac.org) or 651-644-3036 to request training.

## Internet resources promote cultural diversity

Parenting across cultures and races presents special challenges. The following Internet sites offer resources that may be useful as you promote diversity and education about different cultures.

### **www.Cultureforkids.com**

Offers parent and teacher resources for books, games and toys related to many cultures, including language materials.

### **www.Multiculturalkids.com**

Sells mixed race and multicultural dolls, including dolls with physical disabilities.

### **www.globalcarfts.org**

Works with native craftspeople to produce and market African arts and crafts and encourage economic development.

### **www.Adoptshoppe.com**

Provides general adoption announcements and stationary. Also offers gifts and jewelry primarily for international adoption.

### **www.Appletothecore.com**

Serves as a collection of African-American toys, household products and jewelry with links to e-retail sites.

### **www.Littleafrica.com/kids**

Offers an assortment of African-American games and toys, and Black History materials.

## Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council

### Don't Write Me Off campaign

Director Samuels joined the March meeting of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. He unveiled a new media campaign to change public perception about the foster care system designed by Voices for Illinois Children and Family Support America. The campaign began in April with Public Service Announcements (PSAs) running on WGN Television and some national networks. The "commercials" show youth in daily activities concluding with the child asking the viewer "don't write me off." Private agencies that are participating in the project will field inquiries from the public.



### Deaf and hard of hearing youth need homes

Dr. Michael Wonderlich and Marsha Northrup from the DCFS Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services spoke to the Council on the need to recruit families for youth who are deaf or hard of hearing. DCFS is building up resources, particularly in Cook County. Caregivers who serve this population would receive training in communicating and supporting the cultural needs of the deaf. Contact Dr. Wonderlich at 312-814-5548 for details.

### Training staff on older youth services

Kendall Marlowe of the Division of Service Intervention told the Council of plans for 13 youth summits to happen across the state during April and May. The Office of Education and Transition Services will meet with staff to communicate the many resources that are available as youth approach adulthood. The purpose of the summits is to make sure caseworkers know about educational assistance, employment programs and other supports from the Department and in the community to prepare youth for self-sufficiency.

The Division is also distributing a wallet-sized handout called Get Goal'd to all youth in care. This publication will be a handy reference to all the transition programs the Department offers, along with contact information.

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The next meeting of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council is May 19, in Chicago at 160 N. LaSalle. The meeting starts at 9 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. Contact the Office of Foster Parent Support Services at 217-524-2422.



*Deputy Director Velma Williams discusses new policy with council member Sylvia Flores.*



## Can you be cool and be adopted? Your pre-teen may not think so

Twelve-year-old Mark's parents have done a great job of educating themselves about the issues and challenges of adoptive parenting. They are actively involved in adoptive parent organizations and feel comfortable talking with their children about adoption. Up until just recently, their oldest child, Mark, was also open to talking about adoption.

That's all different now. In September, Mark entered a new school and much to his parent's amazement, is adamant that no one in this school know that he is adopted. Furthermore, Mark leaves the room in a huff if his parents bring up the subject. If asked, Mark says he's fine and just doesn't want to talk about adoption.

*What could be going on?*

*Is Mark's behavior unusual?*

*Have his parent's missed something?*

The good news is that Mark is displaying normal behaviors for his age group. The bad news is that young adoptees often struggle with their adoptive status during the pre-teen years.

By this age, children's cognitive understanding of their adoption story has increased dramatically. They are able to recognize on a much deeper level what it means to be adopted and to have two sets of parents; birth and

adoptive. Thinking about their birth parents' inability to parent may generate conscious and unconscious feelings of being less-than or somehow damaged. Many feel embarrassed about their background.

During the pre-teen years, children want to be just like everyone else, and for many, being adopted means being different. This feeling of difference often prevails whether or not peers are aware of the child's adoption status.

While it is hard to watch your child struggle, the following are suggested ways to help:

1. Remind yourself and your partner that these feelings and behaviors are normal. Talk with other parents who have dealt with these issues and take comfort from not being alone. Remember that you didn't 'do' anything wrong!
2. Be straightforward with your child. Tell him what you have noticed and that his difficulties are normal for many adopted pre-teens. While this doesn't take away the pain for your child, it does remind him that he is not alone and there isn't anything 'weird' or 'wrong' with how he is feeling.
3. Validate your child's feelings of being different. Validating does not mean agreeing with

or even understanding. Rather, validation lets your child know that you recognize how he is feeling.

4. Find time to get together with other children who have been adopted. While your child 'knows' in his head that his family isn't so different, being with others like himself reinforces this concept.
5. Remind your child that you are always available to talk and that you have every confidence that what he is going through is normal and that he will be feeling better soon.
6. Consider seeking professional help. Sometimes a child will agree to meet with a counselor to talk privately about his special issues. More often, the child is not interested, but the parents can gain valuable insight into what might be going on in their family by meeting with a counselor. Often, the consultant/counselor can offer suggestions of family activities or parenting techniques to help the young adoptee during this difficult time.

*Written by Nancy Golden, LCSW,  
Co-Director of the Midwest  
Adoption Center*

# May is Foster Parent Appreciation Month

Take time to celebrate and remember why foster care is so special. Below are 10 ways you and your family can mark the occasion:



1. Join a foster parent support group and take a friend. (See listing on page 4.)
2. Make plans with another foster family to trade an afternoon watching the other's kids. Take the time to do something to refresh yourself.
3. Establish May as the month for an annual family photo. See how your family composition has changed over the years.
4. Meet a couple of foster parent friends and update the kids' lifebooks over coffee.
5. Send a greeting card to a foster child who was formerly in your home.
6. Clip an article or buy a book on foster care for your child's school library.
7. Pass along your newsletter to a friend who mentions they are thinking about foster care.
8. Plan a "mini-reunion" picnic for past and present foster children.
9. Thumb through the Lending Library catalog to find a book and knock off a few training hours.
10. Thumb through the regular library to find a book that has absolutely nothing to do with children and ENJOY.

## Tell it like it is: Readers respond

Families Now and Forever wants to hear the "real deal" on caring for children from those who know best. The new question is...**How do you handle letting schools know about your child's experience with foster care or adoption?**

You can contact me with your response by e-mail at [vjames@idcfs.state.il.us](mailto:vjames@idcfs.state.il.us) or by phone at 312-814-6824. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Vanessa James  
Editor



**Illinois Families  
Now and Forever**

**Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor**

**Bryan Samuels, DCFS Director**

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Northern – Cathy Johnson

Southern – Michael Bollman

Cook North – Sari Rowitz

Cook Central – to be announced

Cook South – Jackie Johnson

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**Printing:** DCFS Print Shop

**Purpose:** To help busy families more effectively parent children currently or formerly in DCFS care. To bring them the best information from the most knowledgeable sources. To promote statewide teamwork in finding permanency for children.

**Address Changes:** Families must notify their licensing representative, who will notify DCFS. Agencies should change office addresses or request staff copies through the Editor.

*Illinois Families Now and Forever* is published six times a year, bi-monthly, and mailed to licensed foster parents, unlicensed relative caregivers, adoptive and guardianship families receiving subsidies, all DCFS staff and private agency staff as ordered. Material may not be reprinted in whole, in part or in any form whatsoever without permission from the Editor or DCFS. Opinions expressed by experts writing articles are no substitute for professional answers or opinions about a family's or child's specific situation. Consult a competent professional for answers to your specific questions.

## A family for me

**Timothy** [6027] Timothy, 16, is a sweet, gentle young man. He laughs easily and is kind to everyone he meets. He loves to be active, and his favorite sports are basketball and baseball. Timothy also enjoys music and has a remarkable talent for memorizing music videos. He can even duplicate the dance moves he sees in them. While he's generally on the quiet side, Timothy loves playing with friends and being part of a group. He has a positive attitude and is very affectionate.

His foster parents said Timothy is very helpful and considerate of others. His teachers said he is fun to have in class. The family for Timothy would provide lots of love and attention. You can support his interests in music and sports. Timothy is very close with his brother and would like to stay in touch with him after joining an adoptive family.

**Whitney** [7529] Whitney, 12, is an outgoing, expressive girl who likes to sing and dance. She is especially inspired by gospel music. In addition to her creative gifts, Whitney has good athletic abilities and enjoys swimming and bike riding. She also takes pride in her appearance and likes to have her hair and nails nicely done. Her teachers and foster

parents said Whitney does a good job of communicating her feelings. She likes to relax by watching TV and going to movies. Parents for Whitney can encourage her to pursue her creative interests. You can provide her with a safe and stable home. Whitney would like to remain in contact with her brothers and sisters, whom she loves very much.

**Brandon** [6906] Brandon, 13, loves movies and music. He especially enjoys Disney DVDs and classical radio stations. When he's not near the TV or radio, Brandon likes to play with toys that light up and make noise. At lunch, he's always happy to see chicken nuggets or peanut butter sandwiches on the menu. Brandon uses a wheelchair to go from place to place. While he doesn't speak, he smiles at people he recognizes, and he vocalizes enthusiastically to his favorite songs.

His foster mother said Brandon is a "smiley guy" who likes being around people. The family for Brandon can be loving, patient, and kind with him. You can be energetic and willing to make a long-term commitment to his care.

**Emmy** [6341] Emmy, 17, is a lively young lady who enjoys swimming, bowling, and other recreational activities. When she's not at the swim lanes or the bowling lanes, she likes to relax by listening to music from the Backstreet Boys and Usher. She also enjoys drawing pictures. While she has some vision impairments, this hasn't stopped her from leading an active life and pursuing her interest in art.

Emmy's teachers said she is a loveable young lady who is eager to learn. She works well independently and in groups. Parents for Emmy would be loving and attentive. Emmy wants to join a "nice" family that likes to go to church, the swimming pool, and the shopping mall. She would like to remain in contact with her brother and grandmother after she is adopted.

**If you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning about other children waiting to be adopted, please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390, or see the AICI web site – [www.adoptinfo-il.org](http://www.adoptinfo-il.org).**

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# DO YOU KNOW A FAMILY FOR ME?

Call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois 800-572-2390.



**Illinois State Fair**  
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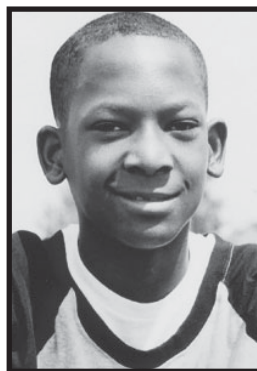
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